



# **WILSON COUNTY EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL June 2025**

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University system, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts Cooperating.*

*Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the program should contact the County Extension Office at least one week prior to the program or event to request mobility, hearing, visual or other assistance.*

Portions of the Texas Master Gardener Management Guide (revised Dec 23) have been liberally used throughout this Manual.

## Foreword

The Wilson County Extension Master Gardeners, Inc. Policies and Procedures Manual (Manual) serves as the Operating Handbook for the organization. It is based upon the following documents:

- WCEMG Bylaws as adopted on January 28, 2025
- [Texas Master Gardeners Association Bylaws](#), revised April 9, 2022
- [Texas Master Gardener Management Guide](#), revised December 5, 2023
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension [Youth Protection Handbook Youth Protection Standards Rules & Guidelines Procedures Handbook](#), revised 2021-2022:
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension [Best Practices Financial Resource Management Resource Manual](#), revised November 2013

This Manual is intended to define and document WCEMG policies, management guidelines and operating procedures. The Manual is designed to:

- Maintain a current and easily accessible guide to all WCEMG policies and procedures.
- Inform the membership of WCEMG policies and procedures.
- Facilitate continuity of WCEMG operations regardless of changes in officers and committees.
- Ensure the periodic review and update of all WCEMG policies and procedures.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL  
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## **CHAPTER 1. MISSION STATEMENT**

Assist the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in providing unbiased, high quality, relevant horticultural education and service to the people of Wilson County and the state of Texas through outreach, teaching and demonstration projects.

Protect and conserve the natural resources of the state by teaching safe, effective, and sustainable horticultural practices that promote the development of healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities.

Develop a strong Master Gardener organization in Wilson County through education and volunteer commitments.

## CHAPTER 2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. To develop a group of well-informed volunteers who can provide education, outreach and service to Wilson County residents.
- B. To recruit new participants into the Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program and to coordinate and fund the best available training for those recruits.
- C. To assist and extend the reach of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (Extension) throughout Wilson County by providing educational programs in horticulture, gardening and other related topics to various groups and organizations.
- D. To answer horticultural questions and inquiries by phone, email, articles written for media publication and other methods of communication with the public.
- E. To develop and enhance community projects related to horticulture, including community and demonstration gardens.
- F. To identify and develop volunteer activities and projects that furthers the mission of both the organization and the Extension.
- G. To establish and maintain youth education programs.
- H. To work toward establishing a viable Speaker's Bureau responsive to the requests of community groups within Wilson County.
- I. To network with other Texas Extension Master Gardeners (TMGA) to expand continuing education opportunities for Wilson County Extension Master Gardener (WCEMG) members.
- J. To recognize exemplary EMG for their volunteer service and leadership.

## CHAPTER 3. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

- A. The WCEMG Policies and Procedures Manual (Manual), serves as the WCEMG Operating Handbook. The Manual is intended to define and document WCEMG policies, management guidelines and operating procedures. It is designed to:
1. Maintain a current and easily accessible guide to all WCEMG policies and procedures.
  2. Facilitate continuity of WCEMG operations regardless of changes in officers and committees.
  3. Ensure the periodic review and updating of the Manual.
- B. The initial version of the Manual was submitted to the Board of Directors (Board) for section-by-section discussion and approval. The version of the manual approved by the Board was approved and submitted to the TMGA
- C. Amending the Manual
1. When a situation arises requiring a formal process for which no policy or procedure currently exists, WCEMG will develop appropriate guidelines and amend the current Manual following the procedures listed below.
  2. Any WCEMG certified member may present a new policy, procedure or a proposed change in writing to the Board.
  3. The Board may recommend approval of new policies, procedures, or changes to the Manual at their regular meeting by a simple majority vote. The Board will distribute via the Volunteer Management System (VMS) the recommended policies, procedures, or changes to the WCEMG membership at least five (5) days before the next regular membership meeting and present those policies, procedures, or changes at the meeting for approval by the membership. A simple majority of members present may approve the policies, procedures, or changes. There may be instances of personal stress or conflict, natural or man-made disasters or outside influences that may call for the Board to act on their own initiative within the intent of the Policies and Procedures on a case-by-case basis. These actions will be made a matter of record in the Board meeting minutes.
  4. If the Board determines the Manual requires an editorial update, change or clarification, the Board may approve the update, change or clarification as long as it does not substantially change a current policy or procedure, at their regular meeting by a simple majority vote without taking it to the membership. An example would be changing from the Texas AgriLife Extension Service to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The Board will post the change to the [WCEMG website](#) and notify the membership of the change via VMS.
- D. The Board will review the Manual every three (3) years.
- E. If ever there is any conflict between the Manual policies and the existing WCEMG Bylaws and TMGA Management Guide, the Bylaws and Management Guide shall prevail.

## CHAPTER 4. USE OF THE TEXAS MASTER GARDENER TITLE

- A. The title of Texas Master Gardener (TMG) or Extension Master Gardener (EMG) is to be used only by individuals who have completed training in the Texas Master Gardener Program and who are actively participating in the program through the Wilson County A&M AgriLife Extension Service (Extension). When an individual ceases active participation in the EMG program or does not meet recertification requirements, the individual's certification as a EMG becomes void.
- B. The title of TMG or EMG may not be used in advertising or for other business purposes and certified, active members may not display credentials or give the appearance of being a TMG or EMG at a place of business or in any form of advertisement where the individual is using the title for personal or business gain. The title is to be used only when doing unpaid volunteer work associated with and approved by the WCEMG. Violation of the policy concerning the use of the title is grounds for removing the certification of a member.
- C. EMG may not imply endorsement of any product by either the TMG or Texas A&M AgriLife Extension or Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service unless that product has officially received endorsement by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (Extension).
- D. EMG or Extension may not imply endorsement of a place of business. EMG may speak before groups at individual nurseries or other places of business and may also use business facilities for advanced education classes or for field trips. Appreciation to these businesses may be shown; however, recommendations for businesses that sell specific products or plants should be done by use of a list with at least three (3) different names.
- E. At activities where information is distributed by the WCEMG, literature, catalogs and flyers on different nurseries, seed companies and other vendors may be offered to the public as long as it is clear that no preferential treatment is being given and more than one business is represented.
- F. EMG who speaks to various groups on horticulture topics, may accept unsolicited reimbursements or nominal gifts or, if offered, suggest that a donation be made to the WCEMG.
- G. It is also permissible to accept EMG discount on products and services offered by various businesses within the horticultural industry, as this is generally considered to be a method of showing appreciation for the volunteer time contributed by the EMG organization.

## CHAPTER 5. MEMBERSHIP

- A. **Master Gardener Trainee (Trainee).** A Trainee is defined as an individual who has applied for and been accepted into the Texas Master Gardener Training Program, who has attended the Class Orientation, and who has completed the EVS and passed a criminal background check.
- B. **Master Gardener Intern (Intern).** A Master Gardener Intern is defined as a member who has successfully completed the required Master Gardener Training Program but has not completed the fifty (50) volunteer hours, which are required to be accomplished within one (1) year from the end of the month of the class graduation. Interns are not WCEMG voting members, nor can they hold office or serve on the Board. Interns can and are encouraged to volunteer for positions with the various committees and teams.
- C. **Certified Extension Master Gardener (EMG)** - A certified EMG is defined as a member who is certified by the (Extension) after successful completion of the Trainee and Intern program and who has completed required volunteer and continuing education hours, paid annual dues, passed and maintained the required criminal background check. The difference in terms of EMG and Texas Master Gardener (TMG) is in who we serve vs. where we serve. Often these terms are interchangeable. Certified EMG are voting members of the WCEMG and can hold office or serve on the Board.
- D. **Leave of Absence (LOA).** On occasion, an EMG or Intern is unable to fulfill the requirements to obtain or maintain certification due to illness, illness in the family, or other personal situations assessed on a case-by-case basis. In cases such as these, a LOA may be requested using this [Leave of Absence Form](#) and granted by the County Extension Agent (Agent). The LOA is to be for a specified period and may have specific training and/or service requirements for the individual to regain full status as an EMG or Intern. LOA is not intended to be used simply because a volunteer does not fulfill certification or recertification requirements. The certified member will continue to pay membership dues while on LOA status.

The EMG must also pay for and pass the EVS modules, criminal background check if it is out of date, and volunteer agreement prior to performing any volunteer activities. If the member has not completed reinstatement activities within the approved time frame, WCEMG will automatically drop him/her from membership.

The Intern may hold LOA status for up to one (1) year, although the Agent at their discretion may extend this time frame. The Intern must also pay for and pass the EVS modules, criminal background check if it is out of date, prior to performing any volunteer activities. If the Intern has not completed the certification requirements within the approved time frame, WCEMG will drop them from membership.

- E. **Reinstatement.** On occasion, an Intern or EMG may allow their membership to lapse and later determine they would like to again become an active WCEMG member. It is the lapsed individual's responsibility to apply in writing or via email to the Board for reinstatement. The decision to allow the individual to pursue reinstatement requirements is made at the discretion of the Board, providing the individual has been in a lapsed status for no more than two (2) years, although the Board, at its discretion, may extend this time frame. The Board may reinstate membership if the individual accomplishes the following requirements within one (1) year from approval to pursue reinstatement.
  - 1. Lapsed EMG
    - a) Complete and sign the [Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement](#), pay for and pass a criminal background check every three (3) years, in conjunction with the Extension Volunteer Services (EVS) training modules.
    - b) Audits a minimum of six (6) classes at the next Master Gardener class at no additional cost. Field trips are not considered classes for this purpose.
    - c) Required to complete the current number of volunteer and continuing education hours required for recertification. This may be done concurrent with or prior to attending the classes. Time spent in auditing class sessions is not counted as either volunteer service or continuing education credits.
    - d) Pay prorated annual dues based on time of certification.

2. Lapsed Intern is required to complete fifty (50) volunteer hours and any other certification requirements.
- F. **Emeritus(a).** Texas Master Gardener Emeritus(a) is an honorary title awarded to a retired EMG who has served the EMG Program with distinction. The decision to bestow this privileged title is serious and should be made by consensus of the Agent and Board. A retired EMG is defined as an individual who chooses not to retain certification through the recertification process as established by State and County guidelines. Examples of distinguished service for Emeritus(a) status, the nomination process, and the recognition and privileges detailed in the [Texas Master Gardener Management Guide](#).
- G. **Honorary.** The Board may approve Honorary membership as a EMG to any person not formerly a certified EMG in recognition of his or her outstanding contribution to horticultural development or to activities of the Master Gardeners. Honorary members shall have none of the obligations of membership but shall be entitled to all of the privileges except those of voting and holding office. The Board will announce Honorary membership at either a regular meeting or at a special function of members.
- H. **Transferring Membership.**
1. **An Intern:** Before an Intern can transfer to another county, they must first complete all requirements for certification in WCEMG before being approved for transfer to another county. The transfer within the VMS system must be done by the state VMS Coordinator upon receipt of the [TMG transfer form](#) and approval by Extension Agents.
  2. **Current Active Members:** A Certified EMG from another county may request a transfer to WCEMG. The member should request the county Extension Agent in the county where membership is active to provide the Wilson County Extension Agent the current status of their membership. The losing county's Extension Agent will notify the Wilson County Extension Agent whether the member currently holds certified status under the losing county's guidelines, or if not, when the member was last certified and the effective date of the last approved criminal background check.
  3. **Previous Active Members:** If a person seeking a Texas county to county transfer once held active membership, and the membership has lapsed for no more than two (2) years, transfer will be approved if the following requirements are met:
    - a. The agent in the last certifying County shall confirm that the person was certified and held active membership during the required time period.
    - b. Apply, pay for and pass a new criminal background check prior to volunteering time on any WCEMG projects.
    - c. Audit a minimum of six (6) classes at the next Master Gardener class at no additional cost. Field trips are not considered classes for this purpose.
    - d. Complete the current number of volunteer and continuing education hours required for recertification. This may be done concurrent with or prior to attending the classes. Time spent in auditing class sessions is not counted as either volunteer service or continuing education credits.
    - e. Pay prorated annual dues based on time of certification.
  4. **Membership from another State Master Gardener Program.** MG holding membership in another state who desires a transfer to WCEMG will request the Extension Agent in the State jurisdiction where membership is active to provide the Wilson County Extension Agent the current status of the transferring member. This notification will include whether the member currently holds certified status under that state's guidelines or if not, when the member was last certified and the effective date of the last approved criminal background check.

The Wilson County Extension Agent will inform the WCEMG Board of the transfer request and whether the process for completing the transfer may continue. The Board will make the final decision on State-to-State transfers. If the person seeking transfer holds an active membership, that person must meet the following requirements before becoming a certified WCEMG.

- a. Attend the next available WCEMG Training course at half (1/2) the full tuition rate. The half (1/2) of full tuition rate will cover the cost for purchase of the Texas Master Gardener Handbook and guest speaker fees.
- b. Complete and sign the [Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement](#), pays for and pass a criminal background check every three (3) years, in conjunction with the Extension Volunteer Services (EVS) training modules.
- c. Complete the current annual recertification required number of volunteer hours. This may be done concurrent with or prior to attending the classes.
- d. Pay prorated annual dues based on time of certification.
- e. If the out of state membership has lapsed, the person must go through the normal application process and complete the Master Gardener training as a new student.

## CHAPTER 6. CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

### A. Requirements for Certified Members

1. Annually recertify as EMG by completing requirements for volunteer service, continuing education, paying dues, completing and signing the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement as required, and paying for and passing a background check as required. Members complete requirements in the current year for recertification effective the following calendar year.
2. Annual Recertification Requirements
  - a. Complete a minimum of twenty (20) hours of volunteer service (VOL).
  - b. Complete a minimum of ten (10) hours of continuing education (CE).
  - c. Record all VOL and CE hours in the Volunteer Management System (VMS) on a monthly basis and before December 31 so TGMA membership dues can be accurately paid and data is included in WCEMG's Annual Report.
  - d. Attend a minimum of five (5) monthly meetings annually.
  - e. Pay for and pass a criminal background check every three (3) years, in conjunction with the Extension Volunteer Services (EVS) training modules.
  - f. Complete and sign the [Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement](#), which is required every three (3) years and done in conjunction with the background check.
  - g. Pay annual dues for the following year beginning in October. The Membership Chair and Treasurer will not accept dues until the member has submitted the minimum hours required for recertification and has a current Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement and criminal background check.

### B. Requirements for Trainee

1. Apply for and be accepted into the Texas Master Gardener Training Program.
2. Attend the Class Orientation or obtain the Orientation information prior to attending the first class.
3. Complete a [Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement](#).
4. Trainee must adhere to the Extension's background screening process. Pay for and pass the Extension Volunteer Services (EVS) online training modules. After the training modules are complete, the applicant will receive instructions regarding the background check.

When the Criminal Background Check process is delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, the Class Coordinator with the consent of the County Extension Agent may approve volunteer opportunities on a case by-case basis. In all approved volunteer service exceptions, no children may be present and a Certified EMG must be present.

5. Once their background check is completed, if approved, Trainee may begin the Training Program
6. Complete a minimum of fifty (50) hours of combined classroom and field instruction. Trainees are responsible for informing the Class Coordinator in advance of missed orientations or classes, especially for workshops or field trips. Trainees are responsible for completing any approved makeup sessions for missed classes. The topic of the makeup session will be the same subject as the missed class. The Class Coordinator will determine and approve make-up opportunities on an individual basis
7. Trainees are encouraged to start working towards the fifty (50) volunteer hours requirement (separate from the fifty (50) hours of instruction) during the classroom-training period as soon as notified they have passed the background check. The Class Coordinator will provide a list of approved projects with contact

names. WCEMG highly encourages Trainees and Interns who are working towards final certification to work on approved projects. These projects are a major part of the WCEMG organization and require many volunteer hours to accomplish the stated goals.

8. Complete, turn-in, and pass all assigned Chapter Tests.
9. WCEMG encourages trainees to attend the regular monthly WCEMG membership meetings. Trainees are welcome to attend Board meetings.
10. Trainees will keep their contact information (email address and phone numbers) current in the Volunteer Management System (VMS). WCEMG uses VMS email as an important information tool to keep members current on WCEMG general activities as well as volunteer and continuing education opportunities.
11. Graduation to Intern will be held after the last scheduled class, as determined by the Class Coordinator(s) and Board. Each graduate will receive a graduation certificate and introduction at the next mutually convenient membership meeting or scheduled social.

#### **C. Requirements for an Intern to become a Certified Extension Master Gardener**

1. Complete certification requirements within one (1) year from the end of the month of the class graduation. If the Intern cannot meet certification requirements within the one (1) year period, they may apply for a Leave of Absence to finish their certification requirements. Further information on this option is available in Chapter 5, "Membership".
2. Complete a minimum of fifty (50) volunteer hours. Of the volunteer hours, only six (6) including to and from travel time can be credited for attendance at WCEMG monthly membership meetings.
3. Interns are not required to pay annual dues until they become certified. Once certified, pay annual dues to the Membership Chair prorated at the current rate based on the month certified for the remainder of the calendar year.
4. Upon certification, the Extension Master Gardener (EMG) will receive a certificate, a permanent name badge and a current annual membership card.

## CHAPTER 7. VOLUNTEER SERVICE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS

### A. Reporting Volunteer (VOL) and Continuing Education (CE) Hours

1. Members are responsible for entering all VOL hours worked and CE hours earned in the Volunteer Management System (VMS). Reporting in VMS is imperative to the continuance of the EMG program which relies upon state and federal funding. Reporting shows the community and our stakeholders the impact our volunteer service provides as well as subsequent grants.
2. Members should report all hours in VMS on at least a monthly basis. Members should report hours for recertification by the October membership meeting so dues can also be paid at that time. Dues will not be accepted if the member has not reported the minimum required hours for recertification. Members should report any additional hours earned by December 31 or sooner so the Membership Chair can include those hours in the annual hours report.
3. The following guidelines apply for reporting hours:
  - a. Report VOL and CE hours in increments of 15 minutes, rounded up. For example, report 15 minutes as .25, 30 minutes as .50, 45 minutes as .75 and one hour as 1.00. You can record partial hours such as .50, whole hours such as 2.00 or a combination of whole and partial hours such as 1.75.
  - b. Describe the VOL activity you performed or the CE activity you attended. Report contact demographics in VMS, if applicable. Provide enough detail to allow the Membership Chair to determine what project was involved and have a general idea of what work was accomplished or the name of the CE event.
  - c. Members may report ALL travel time to and from a VOL or CE event in their reported hours as VOL Hours in VMS. For example, if the volunteer travels for 30 minutes to and from to attend a one (1) hour CE event, the volunteer reports 30 minutes (0.5 hours) as VOL and one (1) hour as CE.

### B. Definition of Approved Volunteer (VOL) Hours

1. Volunteers may report any volunteer activity that promotes the WCEMG Mission Statement to assist the Extension in providing unbiased, high quality, relevant horticultural education, and service to the people of Wilson County and the State of Texas through outreach, teaching, and demonstration projects. This includes teaching safe, effective, and sustainable horticultural practices that promote the development of healthy gardens, landscapes and communities.
2. Examples of reportable VOL activity are holding approved classes on gardening, assisting nonprofit organizations in laying out, designing, and building gardens and landscapes and teaching individuals how to maintain gardens/landscapes. However, the ongoing maintenance of the garden and landscape is not reportable VOL hours, unless the Board has deemed the garden and landscape as an approved WCEMG Volunteer Project.
3. Accountability for programs administered by the WCEMG lies with the Agent, the Board is responsible for evaluating every written request received for one (1) time only assistance or for an official on-going project. The Board will look first at the requesting organization, the scope of work to be done, costs and who has the ultimate responsibility for maintenance of the project. The Board will determine if there are or will be volunteers available to take on either a short-term or long-term project. Once the Board approves the project, volunteer hours will be accepted for members working on that project.
4. Project Application Request should be filed out and turned into the Board for consideration as an approved WCEMG Project. The application is available in the VMS under Docs/Newsletters under Forms. WCEMG may or may not accept financial responsibility for approved projects.
5. The current list of approved projects is posted in VMS, under Docs/Newsletters under Other. The Membership Chair will update this list as new projects are approved and old ones are removed.

6. WCEMG highly encourages Trainees and Interns who are working towards final certification to work on approved projects. These projects are a major part of the WCEMG organization and require many volunteer hours to accomplish the stated goals.
7. If a member has questions about whether the project on which they volunteer time is currently approved, they should contact the Membership Chair.
8. Volunteer hours reported to the WCEMG cannot be reported to or from another volunteer group or program. For example, hours reported for the EMG cannot also be reported to the Master Naturalists.
9. Members may not report volunteer hours that benefit a proprietary organization, that is, a for profit entity. For example, members may not report landscaping for their apartment complex since that is a normal business cost that is paid for by the business.
10. Business meetings, committee meetings, plant sales or other activities done on behalf of the other organization are not reportable as WCEMG VOL hours.
11. WCEMG considers attendance at monthly WCEMG business meetings, Board meetings or other committee or subcommittee meetings where WCEMG affairs are discussed as approved VOL hours. Trainees and Interns working towards certification may only earn six (6) volunteer hours credit to include to and from travel time for their attendance at the WCEMG regular membership meetings. Any attendance at a committee or planning meetings where the Trainee/Intern is a volunteer will count towards VOL hours.
12. Even though business may be discussed at WCEMG Socials, socials are not considered business meetings and VOL hours/travel time may not be reported for attendance.
13. Preparation and research for presentations, workshops, and other training of EMG and the public and making those presentations is reportable as VOL hours.
14. WCEMG considers work on or with any WCEMG committee type function such as newsletters, websites or writing articles for newspapers, as reportable VOL hours.
15. WCEMG considers coordinating the setup and solicitation of volunteers who will bring food or other items for WCEMG membership meetings and/or scheduled socials as reportable VOL hours. Food preparation by a member who has offered to bring an item for a meeting or scheduled social is not reportable as volunteer hours.
16. WCEMG will discuss new projects during membership meetings and announce them in the newsletter and on the WCEMG website. WCEMG also uses VMS email as an important notification tool to keep members current on VOL and CE opportunities.
17. The Board will annually review in November ongoing projects to determine if the project furthers WCEMG's educational mission and how, contributes to or erodes WCEMG's focus on public education, is worth the use of volunteer time and exposure and whether there may be potential interest within the WCEMG membership in doing the project properly.

### **C. Definition of Approved Continuing Education (CE) Hours**

1. CE in the various facets of gardening is a critical part of being a WCEMG and provides an opportunity to focus on specific interests. Lectures, workshops, hands-on training which are important not only for advancing our knowledge, but also for meeting other EMG and the public.
2. CE opportunities are made available through the Extension, Texas Parks and Wildlife, the Texas Forest Service, along with EMG sponsored activities or any number of short courses that are provided by other outside activities.

3. There are many on-line programs via the [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension website](#), such as Earth Kind and Tomato 101 learning modules, along with other programs that provide a good learning experience. Since there may be times when our members' access to continuing education is limited by physical restrictions, educational TV/YouTube programs may be considered an acceptable form of CE. However, members must obtain approval from the Educational Enrichment Program Chair (Education Chair) before those hours can be accepted. Contact the Education Chair with any questions.
4. If an EMG is a member of another volunteer organization that does not report hours for credit, garden related educational programs provided by that organization may be reported as education hours for the WCEMG. .If CE is in question, check with Membership Chair.
5. Members may not report educational training sessions that are taken to certify or to meet a membership requirement for another volunteer organization as education hours for the WCEMG. For example, training classes necessary to certify as a Master Naturalist would not be reportable as WCEMG hours. However, taking a class in plant identification organized by the Native Plant Society (NPSOT) would be reportable CE hours since NPSOT does not require any reporting of hours or training to be a member of that organization.
6. Attendance at Extension Master Gardener Advanced Training is approved CE hours, even if the EMG does not receive certification. Travel time to and from the training is approved VOL hours.
7. Once certified as an EMG, attendance at the WCEMG annual training classes to increase knowledge of a particular subject is approved CE hours, as is attendance at any lectures or workshops given by other Extension Master Gardener organizations.
8. Should there be any question about the validity of hours submitted for CE credit, the Membership Chair will send information to the Education Chair for review with the final approval left to the discretion of the Education Chair, under advisement of the Agent.

## CHAPTER 8. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

All who encounter the TMG program and Extension must be treated in a manner that is not only respectful, but also safe. WCEMG volunteers must adhere to the agency's background screening process, which is administered through the agency's Extension Volunteer Standards (EVS) office. More details of this new program can be found in the [MG Management Guide](#).

- A. **Initial assessment of a volunteer** is conducted when they submit their application as a WCEMG volunteer with the WCEMG. Once the volunteer's application is accepted, they must complete an online training course regarding history and standards of the Extension through the AgriLife Learn platform. Before beginning the training, the application fee is collected. After completing the online modules, the applicant will receive instructions for the background check. Trainees may not work on any WCEMG volunteer project until they have a current background check. When the Background Check process is delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, the Class Coordinator, with the consent of the Agent, may approve volunteer opportunities on a case-by-case basis. In all approved volunteer service exceptions, no children may be present and a Certified EMG must be present.
- B. **EMG** must reapply every three (3) years for an updated background check. All certified members will pay the application fee, complete the EVS modules, and submit information for the background check. The EVS Application system will alert volunteers sixty (60) days prior to the expiration of their last background check if a valid email address is in the system. If the process is not completed, the individual may not participate in volunteer activities and will forfeit the fee.

Extension has contracted with a company to provide only criminal background history including a search of the Government Watch List Search, Office of Foreign Asset Control, DOJ Sex Offender Search, and a National Criminal History Search. Criminal background checks must be completed before the Membership Chair or Treasurer will accept annual dues or Trainee begins Training Program.

## CHAPTER 9. DUES

- A. Dues are paid by Certified Members on an annual basis as part of the recertification requirement.
  - 1. Any change in the amount of the annual dues shall be recommended by the Board of Directors and must be approved by the membership at a regular business meeting.
  - 2. The Membership Chair shall not accept dues until the minimum hours for recertification has been logged in VMS, there is a current Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement on file, and the application for criminal background check, if due, has been submitted.
  - 3. Beginning at the October general membership meeting, the Membership Chair will be set up for acceptance of dues and dues payments may be accepted online, if available. Notices will be sent to the membership about the importance of early payment and payment opportunities.
  - 4. Members who have not paid dues by December 10 will receive a notice from the Membership Chair via the VMS. If dues are not paid by December 31, their status in VMS will be changed to "Inactive" and they will be dropped from the membership roster.
- B. Interns are not required to pay annual dues. Upon certification as a EMG, Interns will pay prorated dues at the current rate for the remaining months of the calendar year.
- C. Dues are \$20 per year per member. Annual dues include the cost of membership cards, Texas Master Gardener Association (TMGA) annual dues, and expenses related to other needs of the organization.
- D. Per the [Texas Master Gardener Management Guide](#), members on Leave of Absence (LOA) status will continue to pay membership dues.

## CHAPTER 10. MEETINGS

### A. Regular Membership Meetings

1. Regular membership meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, a minimum of ten (10) months of the year.
2. An important part of the regular meeting is to welcome any guests, new members, and new Trainees or Interns. This should be done after the meeting opens.
3. An Agenda for the business part of the meeting should be provided for membership, which can be through a PowerPoint.
4. The Annual Meeting is held on the second Thursday in November. At this meeting, Officers will be elected for the next year and any other special business that may arise will be conducted.
5. Twenty five percent (25%) of the certified membership constitutes a quorum.

### B. Board of Directors Meetings

1. The Board of Directors (Board) meets monthly, in person or virtually, or as necessary. A special meeting may be called if there is a specific point of business requiring Board action that cannot wait until the next monthly Board meeting.
2. Traditionally, the meetings are held the Monday following the Monthly Meeting. That schedule may be changed should the Board deem it necessary to do so.
3. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the filled Board voting members.
4. WCEMG members, interns, and trainees are invited and encouraged to attend and observe the Board of Directors meetings. If an attendee wants to speak to the Board, they must be on the agenda, as per Robert's Rules of Order. The President can call for an executive session during the meeting, at which time non-board members must leave.
5. In an emergency or a need for action where the Board of Directors are not available for a meeting, a poll of the Board may be taken via email; the voted action will be ratified at the next regular Board meeting and entered into the minutes of the meeting at that time.

### C. Special Meetings

1. Special meetings of the membership may be called if the need arises at the discretion of the President or three (3) members of the Board.
2. Special meetings will be announced to the membership via VMS at least three (3) days prior to the meeting date.

### D. Committee Meetings

1. Committee meetings may be called at the discretion of the appropriate committee chair.
2. As both the President and President-Elect are ex-officio members of all committees except the Nominating Committee, the Committee Chair shall keep the President and President-Elect informed of any Committee meetings to be held.

### E. Socials

1. A Summer Social is usually held in June or July (month to be decided by membership based on availability of facilities) and a Fall or Christmas social.

2. A Project Coordinator(s) organizes Socials with input from the membership.

#### **F. Other Meetings/Events**

1. WCEMG member(s) wishing to create a new committee or hold a new meeting must notify the Board and obtain approval at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. Meetings should be open to other WCEMG members and this allows proper coordination and publication.
2. A member wishing to hold any event representing the WCEMG (such as a booth or table at a garden center, local market, school, etc.) must obtain prior approval from the Board at least fourteen (14) days before the event. Exceptions can be made under extreme conditions with approval from the Board by email, but there must be at least 48 hours notification. This ensures that there are no conflicts with other events for supplies, volunteers, and signage, and that appropriate insurance, licenses, tax IDs and guidelines are followed.

## CHAPTER 11. BUDGET

It is WCEMG policy that members are not expected to expend personal funds for WCEMG business. Members may donate funds or items to WCEMG at their discretion without expectation of reimbursement. Members may contact the Treasurer for procedures on requesting a tax receipt for donated items.

### A. Budget Responsibilities:

1. Program, committee, and project leaders shall submit their anticipated budget needs to the Treasurer before the September Board meeting, at which time the Treasurer presents the proposed budget for the new fiscal year for Board review. Budgets should be an accurate forecast of the yearly project plans and needs of the program, committee and project.
2. Program, committee and project leaders will be given the opportunity to be scheduled for an individual appointment with the Board to present their request and Board will ask questions as needed. This can be done in person or virtually or by phone, as needed. It is vital for the project leads to be available to ensure that any needed discussions about aligning the project with the goals and mission of WCEMG can happen.
3. The fiscal year budget for WCEMG is reviewed at the October Board meeting and voted on by Board members for approval.
4. Requests to make changes to the budget may be made during the year by program, committee and project leaders as needed and will be reviewed for approval by the Board.
5. Unbudgeted expenditures over \$100 require Board approval prior to expenditure, if seeking reimbursement. Unbudgeted expenditures are at the risk of the project owner and are not guaranteed to be reimbursed or approved by the Board.

### B. Approval of Expenditures and Reimbursements:

Expenditures must be approved beforehand. The process for approval follows:

1. If the current budget contains a line item for a particular program, committee or project, the chair of that program, committee or project may expend funds within the approved budgeted amount. The chair submits a Request for Reimbursement labeled with the program, committee or project and receipts attached to the WCEMG Treasurer for reimbursement.
2. Project chairs may authorize individual members to expend funds within the approved project line-item budgeted amount. Individual project members may submit a Request for Reimbursement signed by the project chair with the program, committee or project name and receipts attached to the WCEMG Treasurer for reimbursement.
3. Members must submit reimbursement requests and receipts for expenditures to the Treasurer within 30 days of expenditure. Any purchases made in December must be submitted for reimbursement by December 31 of that year. Failure to submit timely reimbursement requests may result in reimbursement denial.
4. If the current budget does not have a line item for a particular program, committee or project, or if the proposed expenditure is larger than the existing line item, the chair of that program, committee or project must request Board approval of the expenditure prior to expenditure.
5. Expenditures are approved for the stated budget line item only. If there is a significant change in budget, the program, committee or project leader should present the budget change to the Board for approval. The Treasurer will update the change in the following month's budget report.
6. Unspent program, committee or project budgets will be absorbed into the general WCEMG fund at the end of the year.

## CHAPTER 12. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- A. The Board of Directors (Board) is responsible for managing the affairs of the WCEMG. Per the Bylaws, the Executive Members are voting members of the Board shall consist of the President, President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and the Past President as a non-voting member.
- B. The Board is responsible for supporting the mission, goals, policies, programs, strengths, and needs of the WCEMGs and the Extension and for encouraging the membership to do the same. The Board represents the public image of the Corporation.
- C. Incoming Officers must receive training, guidance, and support in order to be successful and ensure the success of the WCEMG mission. Training should include:
  - 1. A meeting between the outgoing and incoming officers to share files, explain processes and duties, and discuss what worked or did not work.
  - 2. A training and information forum for new officers to review the Corporation's mission and goals, Bylaws, Manual, and the Texas Master Gardeners Management Guide. It should also include discussion about the special non-profit status of the organization.
- D. Duties of the Board shall include but not be limited to:
  - 1. Authorize special committees as the Board deems necessary and appropriate.
  - 2. Develop, approve, and adjust, as necessary, the WCEMG's annual budget. Review the WCEMG's financial position.
  - 3. Meet monthly, or as necessary to accomplish the affairs of the Corporation, with a minimum of ten (10) meetings per year.
  - 4. Read and understand the WCEMG's Bylaws and Manual.
- E. Members of the Board shall be held to the following minimum expectations:
  - 1. Each voting member of the Board shall prepare for and participate in Board and membership meetings.
  - 2. Seek and respect the opinions of other Board members. Support the majority decision.
  - 3. Assist in identifying and recruiting future Board members.
  - 4. Be active members of the Corporation in good standing.

## CHAPTER 13. OFFICERS

### A. President

1. The previous year's President-Elect moves into this position on January 1 when the current President's term expires. The position of President requires a two (2) year commitment under normal circumstances, since the President succeeds to the Past President upon the expiration of the President's term.
2. If there is not a President-Elect at the time of nominations, the President may stay an additional year instead of moving to Past-President.
3. Duties of the President include but are not limited to:
  - a. Be responsible for the general management of the affairs of the Corporation.
  - b. Be the primary spokesperson for the WCEMG.
  - c. Support the mission, goals, policies, programs and activities of the WCEMG.
  - d. Provide leadership to the Board and membership. Assist in setting goals and expectations for the Board. Guide and mediate Board actions with respect to WCEMG priorities and concerns.
  - e. Work closely with the President-Elect and the Agent for the implementation of the policies as approved by the Board.
  - f. Maintain awareness of the Board and membership activities. Stay informed of the various activities in which the Board and membership are engaged and project a supportive attitude toward their involvement. Be a model volunteer, visible at major and key activities.
  - g. Be an ex-officio member with voting rights of all committees except the Audit or Nominating Committees.
  - h. Appoint standing committee chairs and any special committees, as approved by the Board, except as specifically provided in the Corporation's Bylaws.
  - i. Preside over all meetings of the Board and general membership meetings.
  - j. Prepare agendas for both Board and general membership meetings. Send required notices for Board meetings and any special meetings. Per the Bylaws, notices must be distributed via the VMS at least three (3) business days prior to special board or special membership meetings.
  - k. Complete the AgriLife Extension and External Support Groups training modules [Financial Management Best Practices for Volunteers](#).
  - l. Work with the Treasurer to establish and maintain a budget format presented to the Board at the October board meeting.
  - m. Maintain good communication with the President-Elect and proactively seek to keep them informed regarding ongoing activities to ensure a smooth leadership transition.
  - n. Meet with the Agent monthly or more often if needed to discuss Board and Membership activities.
  - o. Read and be familiar with the Corporation's Bylaws and Manual, the [Texas Master Gardener Management Guide](#) and the various forms and reports required by Extension and the TMGA.
  - p. Sign on the Corporation checking account, along with the Treasurer and President-Elect.

- q. Reporting
  - 1) Provide Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent [Charter Document](#) as specified in Chapter 17, Special Reports, no later than January 31.
  - 2) Provide Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent reports, as requested.
  - 3) Provide Treasurer budget estimates, as requested.
- t. After the role of Past President, may be re-elected for additional term.

## **B. President-Elect**

1. The position of the President-Elect requires a three (3) year commitment, under normal circumstances. After serving as the President-Elect for one (1) year, the President-Elect succeeds to the presidency on January 1 upon expiration of the President's term. After serving as President for one (1) year, the President succeeds to the Past President upon expiration of the President's term.
2. Duties of the President-Elect include but are not limited to:
  - a. Assist the President in the performance of their duties, as requested.
  - b. Support the mission, goals, policies, programs, strengths and needs of the WCEMG.
  - c. Provide leadership to the Board. Along with the President, assist in setting goals and expectations for the Board.
  - d. Work closely with the President and the Agent to ensure a smooth transition to the office of President.
  - e. Serve as an ex-officio member with voting rights of all committees except the Audit or Nominating Committees.
  - f. Maintain awareness of the Board and membership activities. Be visible at key volunteer activities.
  - g. Complete the AgriLife Extension and External Support Groups training modules [Financial Management Best Practices for Volunteers](#).
  - h. Coordinate monthly reconciliation of bank accounts with the Treasurer, as per section of this Manual Chapter 12:E. Treasurer.
  - i. Officially assume duties January 1. It is suggested the incoming President-Elect attend the December Board meeting as an observer.

## **C. Vice President**

1. Serve for a term of one (1) year. As per the existing Bylaws, may be re-elected for additional terms but not more than two (2) consecutive terms.
2. Duties of the Vice President include but are not limited to:
  - a. Act in place of the President and preside in their absence, when required.
  - b. Assist the President and the President-Elect in their duties.
  - c. Serve as Bylaws Committee Chair, as per the Bylaws.
3. Serves as the Educational Enrichment Program Committee Chair, as per the Bylaws

- a. The Committee is responsible for arranging programs for monthly meetings, certification classes, additional educational enrichment programs, seminars, and field trips.
  - b. This Committee will work with the Agent to ensure that all programs are appropriate and suitable for certification and recertification requirements
4. Organizes educational programs for WCEMG regular membership meetings.
- a. Arrange programs a minimum of three (3) months in advance. Prior to the end of the calendar year and end of term, ensures speakers are set up through March of the following year so a smooth transition can be made to the new Board.
  - b. Provide information on speakers and programs in a timely manner to the Communication Chair and others, as needed, so program information may be publicized to the public and the membership.
  - c. Coordinate with the Treasurer for timely payment to the speakers of honorarium fees and mileage.
5. Class Coordinator for certification training program for WCEMG Interns and Trainees.
6. Record Keeping: Maintain list of past speakers, topics, and costs for future programming considerations.
7. Reporting: Provide Treasurer budget estimates, as requested, such as projected membership meeting speaker costs.
8. Officially assume duties January 1. It is suggested the Vice President-elect attend the December Board Meeting as an observer.

#### **D. Secretary**

- 1. Serve for a term of one (1) year. As per the existing Bylaws, may be re-elected for additional terms but not more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- 2. Duties of the Secretary include but are not limited to:
  - a. Record the minutes of all Board meetings, general membership meetings and any special meetings that may be called.
  - b. Maintain all necessary correspondence.
  - c. In a timely fashion, provide a preliminary copy of the Board Meeting minutes to the Board for their review and correction. Provide the Agent with a copy of the minutes after correction is made. Provide a copy of the Membership Meeting minutes to the Board for final approval before minutes are presented to membership prior to the subsequent month's meeting.
  - d. Send appropriate cards or letters to members identified as being in need.
  - e. Assist the President and President-Elect in their duties, as requested.
  - f. Record Keeping
    - 1) Post approved Membership and Board Meeting Minutes to VMS.
    - 2) Keep record of attendance at all meetings to ensure presence of a quorum.
      - a) Regular Membership Meetings require twenty five percent (25%) of the certified membership for a quorum.

- b) Board Meetings require two-thirds (2/3) of the filled Board voting members for a quorum.
- 3. Maintain the annual calendar of events when Project Coordinators and volunteers are needed. Provide calendar updates to the Board and the membership at the beginning of each year with updates or date corrections as needed.
- 4. Officially assume duties January 1. It is suggested that the Secretary-elect attend the December Board Meeting as an observer.

#### **E. Treasurer**

- 1. As per the existing Bylaws, the Treasurer serves for a term of one (1) year but may be re-elected for additional terms but not more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- 2. Duties of the Treasurer include but are not limited to:
  - a. Serve as Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation. Responsible for the custody of all funds and securities of the Corporation.
  - b. Prior to the January Board meeting, meet with bank representative(s) and establish new signature cards for check writing authorization for incoming President and Treasurer. Establish authorization and passwords for on-line banking and to receive monthly bank statements.
  - c. Provide reimbursement to members on receipt of timely filed reimbursement request form and back up documents.
  - d. Monthly provides the President-Elect the checkbook and bank statement for purposes of reconciliation in a timely manner. This may be done electronically.
  - e. Presents a proposed fiscal year budget to the Board of Directors for approval at the October Board Meeting.
    - 1) Work with the President to establish and maintain budget format.
    - 2) Solicits budget input far enough in advance, but not later than August 1, to allow the various Project Coordinators and Points of Contact to provide input for the next calendar year's proposed budget. Projected budget input includes specific project plans and an itemized cost estimate of expenditures required to fulfill project plans.
    - 3) An annual Project Application Request form will be submitted for all WCEMG Project by September 15. The application is available in the VMS under Docs/Newsletters under Forms. WCEMG may or may not accept financial responsibility for approved projects.
    - 4) Present proposed yearly budget to Board for approval.
    - 5) The Board approves the next fiscal year budget at the November board meeting.
    - 6) Provide approved budget for review by the general membership at the November Annual Corporation Meeting.
- 3. Assist Class Coordinator to ensure timely payment of all speakers for the current Master Gardener Training Class.
- 4. Complete the AgriLife Extension and External Support Groups training modules [Financial Management Best Practices for Volunteers](#).

5. Read and be familiar with the BEST PRACTICES: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services [FINANCIAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MANUAL](#), which provides extensive guidelines for External Support Groups along with forms that can be used or modified for specific use. Although it is not practical to strictly adhere to every item listed, the Treasurer should be familiar with the Financial Resource Management Manual particularly related to internal controls and proper record keeping. Questions related to procedures that may be required by Extension should be directed to the Agent for input and final decision. Another resource is the [Financial Responsibility video](#).
6. Record Keeping
  - a. Receive all monies for the Corporation. Keep an exact accounting of all income, bank deposits, disbursement and other financial matters using an automated software program approved by the Board to maintain a breakdown of income and expenses in various categories and provide reports as requested by the Board.
  - b. Present financial records for annual audit by the Audit Committee appointed by the President. Provides Audit Committee chair the following, but not limited to, to conduct the audit:
    - 1) Copy of previous year's annual report.
    - 2) Copy of previous year's budget.
    - 3) Treasurer's monthly report for the end of the previous year and for each month of the audit year.
    - 4) Check the register for the year being audited.
    - 5) Monthly bank statements.
    - 6) Itemized explanation for each deposit.
    - 7) Reimbursement request forms with receipt attached and project identified.
7. Reporting
  - a. Provide monthly financial reports to the Board and to the general membership.
  - b. Monthly Financial Report shall include, but not be limited to, a line-item accounting of monthly income, monthly expenses, overall starting and ending balance, and balances in the designated sub-accounts, if any.
  - c. Budget to Actuals Report shall include, but not be limited to, a line-item accounting of budget to actuals.
  - d. This can be provided digitally to the Board, to save time in the Board meetings. If desired, only significant budgetary issues could be discussed at the meeting.
  - e. Chartering Documents in January
    - 1) Annual approved budget.
    - 2) Profit and loss statement for the calendar year. Reconcile the December bank statement prior to providing the profit and loss statement.
    - 3) Copy of IRS Form 990 or 990-N, or evidence of filing of the form for the current year.
    - 4) Final audit or financial review report.

- f. File required report and pay TMG Association annual dues on a timely basis as per instructions in the Special Reports section of the Manual.
- g. Provide required reports and payments for various state and federal agencies on a timely basis but always prior to deadline.
  - 1) Sales tax report, presently set up on an annual basis due around January 20.
  - 2) Files IRS Form 990 or 990-N (e-postcard) for the Corporation's non-profit status beginning in January but not later than May 15.
  - 3) Letters to donors of \$250 or more in the prior year due by January 31 of the subsequent year.
- 8. Become the subject matter expert and willing to train others as needed in the cashier duties and policies needed for various WCEMG events.
- 9. Assist the President and President-Elect in their duties, as requested.
- 10. Officially assume duties January 1st. It is suggested the Treasurer-elect attend the December Board Meeting as an observer.

#### **F. Past President**

- 1. As per the Bylaws, the Past President is not deemed as an Officer of the Corporation but is a member of the Board. The President succeeds to the Past President upon the expiration of the President's term. The position of the Past President requires a one (1) year commitment.
- 2. Duties of the Past President include but are not limited to:
  - a. Support the mission, goals, policies, programs, and activities of the WCEMG.
  - b. Provide leadership to the President and Board.
  - c. Attend Board meetings as a non-voting member.
  - d. Perform other duties as requested by the President.
  - e. The Past President's role is to collaborate significant efforts of the prior year's Board to best move forward the goals and mission of WCEMG.

## CHAPTER 14. TEXAS MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS

- A The TMGA Directors are WCEMG representatives appointed by WCEMG to carry out state and county business. WCEMG may elect two (2) directors. Each director may cast one vote at TMGA meetings. TMGA recommends each association appoint two (2) alternates who can represent the County in the absence of their designated director.
- B The Nominating Committee will inform membership of Directors and Alternate Positions that need to be filled at the October Membership Meeting and solicit volunteers.
- C Duties of the TMGA Directors include but are not limited to:
  - 1. Within WCEMG:
    - a. Promote the Texas Master Gardener awards program.
    - b. Encourage WCEMG to contribute to the TMGA newsletter.
    - c. Attend WCEMG Board Meetings as a non-voting member to stay informed on WCEMG needs, events and activities when attending TMGA meetings.
  - 2. Within TMGA:
    - a. Attend TMGA Directors meetings and vote regarding TMGA business.
    - b. Apprise TMGA of resources needed by WCEMG.
    - c. Assist TMGA Nominating Committee with identifying officers.
    - d. Assist TMGA President with identifying committee chairs and members.
    - e. Contact TMGA president if they would like to present pertinent information to the state at a Director's meeting.
    - f. Inquire about TMGA decisions and/or policies that are unclear.
  - 3. Reporting.
    - a. Provide written notes of the TMGA business meeting to the WCEMG Board for attachment to Board Meeting minutes.
    - b. Provide TMGA Secretary a roster of WCEMG Officers and TMGA Directors with contact information via email by January 31. Roster includes name and email addresses.

## CHAPTER 15. EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

- A. The Vice President is the Educational Enrichment Program (Education) Chair, as per the Bylaws and is responsible for defining methods of education for the public and for continuing education of WCEMG members.
- B. Duties of the Education Chair include but are not limited to:
1. Plan, coordinate and promote various continuing educational opportunities to provide certified EMG with sufficient opportunities to meet recertification requirements.
  2. Offer continuing educational activities at various times including weekends, so members can participate at times appropriate to their schedules.
  3. Provide continuing education opportunities during the year at other locations within Wilson County, if facilities are available.
  4. Assist instructors with preparation and delivery of programs, such as technical assistance with computers, presentations, or educational handouts. Also, provide training on various programs, such as PowerPoint or Word, and presentation skills, if requested.
  5. Assist with updates of educational materials provided for various events and/or public distribution as requested and approved by the Board.
  6. Plan, coordinate and promote seminars, workshops and other educational opportunities for the public.
  7. Work with the County Extension Agent and 4-H Agent to provide support for their education programs.
  8. Research and provide information on educational opportunities that might be of interest to WCEMG.
  9. Approve webinars and videos for CE Hours for members whose access to CE is limited by physical restrictions. (Refer to Chapter 7. VOL Service & CE Hours.)
  10. Provide information on events in a timely manner to the Communication Chair for public advertising.
  11. Provide monthly updates for upcoming CE opportunities.
  12. Record keeping:
    - a. Keep records of speakers and other activities, recommendations and input from WCEMG and public as to effectiveness of programs.
    - b. Keep record of funds needed for speakers and events so that costs can be adjusted or reflected in the WCEMG budget.
    - c. Request and evaluate feedback from WCEMG and public as to types of programs and speakers that would be most useful to them.

13. Reporting.
  - a. Provide reports to the Board as to the status of any education programs.
  - b. Provide status reports on ongoing programs to general membership at regular meetings.
  - c. Provide Treasurer budget estimates, as requested.
14. Extension Master Gardener Class Coordinator
  - a. The Vice President shall serve as the Class Coordinator.
  - b. Duties:
    - 1) Determine class dates, time, and location.
    - 2) Work in conjunction with the Agent class schedule and curriculum of a minimum of 50 classroom hours or more to allow for absences to support the Texas Master Gardener Handbook.
    - 3) Identify and recruit instructors for each topic.
    - 4) Develop and modify class application.
    - 5) Develop and modify class flyer. Work in conjunction with the Communications Committee on design and advertising options.
    - 6) Recruit students in conjunction with the Communications Committee.
    - 7) Develop and edit and use appropriate administrative materials.
    - 8) Store supplies with label(s) with a POC # (can use the Library Storage or the MG office).
    - 9) Manage class budget and provide Treasurer budget estimate as requested.
15. Record Keeping
  - a. Maintain a list of available instructors and topics.
  - b. Maintain attendance hours spreadsheet and forward to Membership Chair for certification purposes upon class completion.
  - c. Maintain a testing spreadsheet and forward to Membership Chair for certification purposes upon class completion.
  - d. Keep record of required funds for handbooks, speakers, etc., so costs can be adjusted or reflected in the WCEMG budget.
16. Reporting: Provide WCEMG Treasurer budget estimates, as requested.

## CHAPTER 16. STANDING COMMITTEES

### A. Communications Committee

1. The Communications Chair is appointed by the President as per the Bylaws and coordinates both the internal membership communications as well as the external community.
2. Responsible for public relations and publicity of WCEMG activities, including but not limited to involvement in publication of the newsletter, the WCEMG Website, Social Media platforms (for example, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube), email, and other publicity venues.
3. Requirements: Have access to a desktop, laptop or tablet and the Internet, and be willing to learn new software and platforms to more effectively reach our membership and our communities.
4. Duties of the Communications Chair include but are not limited to:
  - a. Work closely with the Newsletter Publisher, Webmaster(s), and Social Media Editors (for example: Facebook, Instagram Editor, and YouTube) to ensure timely publication of all matters pertaining to the WCEMG. Publicize events, such as plant sales and WCEMG opportunities (scholarships, services, educational events) to the public via community calendars, flyer placement, etc. Act as liaison between these positions and the WCEMG Board.
  - b. Maintain a master list of all publicity venues available for publication of WCEMG programs, events, meetings, workshops, and training classes and ensure timely announcements are released to the general public regarding those opportunities.
  - c. Coordinates publicity efforts with the Newsletter Publisher, Webmaster(s) and Social Media platforms and other publicity venues.
  - d. Coordinate educational content between Newsletter and Social Media platforms. For example: such as pruning or seed starting.
  - e. Participate directly on the different WCEMG Social Media platforms. This duty could be delegated to various Social Media leads based on the Committee.
  - f. Maintain a list of passwords and other security measures for individual platforms and share with the President.
  - g. Work with the Education Chair to ensure quality WCEMG presentations.
  - h. Collaborate cohesive branding across WCEMG for advertisements and announcements.
    - 1) Ensure the flyer is professional and eye-catching.
    - 2) Ensure the appropriate logos are used.
    - 3) Ensure the same visuals are used to promote but adjusted to individual publicity requirements and format.
4. Submit monthly reports as needed at the Board and Membership Meetings.
5. As a point of contact for project managers, obtain information and pictures and videos from them and share with appropriate leads to put content on media platforms.
6. Ensure that what is broadcast to the public is correct and appropriate and aligns with our EMG goals and objectives.
7. Work with the Social Media platform leads to ensure that content is effective and successful. Monitor the analytics on the Social Media platforms (currently: Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube) to determine

success. If there isn't an editor for one of the Social Media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube), fill in their duties as below and actively try to recruit a lead for the media platform.

- a. Coordinate with one or more people to photograph and video at events.
- b. Check notifications on the platform and reply and comment as needed. Consult with fellow EMGs, as needed. Reply to comments on posts and messages.
- c. Maintain the WCEMG page for the individual platforms as needed.
  - 1) Post photographs and videos showing WCEMG's activities and local news.
  - 2) Post upcoming events.
  - 3) Post current, pertinent gardening information as well as information of interest to EMGs and the gardening public.
  - 4) Promote upcoming classes and membership meetings.

## **B. Membership Committee**

1. The Membership Chair is appointed by the President as per the Bylaws and is responsible for administering the Volunteer Management System (VMS), membership outreach, Background Checks and Volunteer and Annual Awards Recognition Programs.
2. Requirements. Basic knowledge of VMS and databases.
3. Duties of the Membership Chair include but are not limited to:
  - a. Administers the VMS for the WCEMG.
    - 1) Reviews member hours posted in VMS monthly to ensure they are reportable within the guidelines established in Chapter 7 of this manual and reported using the appropriate project and type of hours (VOL and/or CE) for accuracy and consistency in Association reports.
    - 2) Makes minor changes such as VOL to CE and vice versa or selecting the appropriate project name.
    - 3) For other reporting issues, contact members via VMS or phone for clarification and correction of reported hours.
    - 4) Maintains and updates the membership roster in VMS (name, email address, and preferred telephone number) as needed.
4. Provides VMS training to students and membership.
5. Periodically reviews posted Board Documents in VMS to ensure accuracy.
6. Determines eligibility for members in good standing, recertification, transfers and leave of absence requests. Presents membership recommendations to the Board for consideration and approval.
7. Accepts and records dues from individuals meeting certification/recertification requirements as prescribed by the Manual. Gives Treasurer dues with appropriate record keeping documentation.
  - a. The Membership Chair shall not accept dues until the minimum hours for certification or recertification have been reported and every three (3) years the [Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement](#), Extension Volunteer Services (EVS) training modules and passed a criminal background check.
  - b. Provide newly certified members with the prorated dues amount to be paid for the current year.

- c. Begins collecting dues from members in October for the following year.
  - d. Prepares annual membership cards for certified EMG for distribution at the January Membership Meeting.
  - e. If members are not present at January meeting, Membership Chair will make arrangements to provide Membership Card to member.
8. Orders name badges for newly certifying members or members who request a replacement. Collect money for replacement nametags.
  9. Administers membership outreach to draw inactive members into the active ranks.
    - a. Periodically check in with Leave of Absence, Interns, and EMGs who have not met certification or recertification requirements for the following year, offering assistance in finding volunteer and continuing education opportunities.
    - b. Annually, assess hours reported by August. Contact individuals who have not met certification requirements and remind them of upcoming opportunities.
    - c. Offers [Leave of Absence](#) status to individuals not meeting certification or recertification requirements.
    - d. Notifies individuals placed in an inactive status.
  10. Administers the Criminal Background Check requirements for the Corporation.
    - a. Coordinates with the Agent to monitor WCEMG EVS applications for members requiring updated background checks.
    - b. Updates approved background checks in VMS.
    - c. Ensures members complete the Volunteer Agreement form every three (3) years in conjunction with the background check.
    - d. Notifies members when their background checks will be expiring and informs them of the EVS process, which is required to complete the online training modules and apply for an updated background check.
  11. Administers the WCEMG Volunteer Recognition and Annual Awards Recognition Programs, as approved by the Board. Current programs include, but are not limited to:
    - a. Monthly Volunteer Hour Recognition
    - b. 100 Volunteer Hours
    - c. Annual Service Awards (Years of Service for 5 years and increments of 5 thereafter)
      - 1) TMGA recognizes Service Milestones during the annual conference. Membership Chair provides volunteer service years in five (5) year increments, those being 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years as of December 31 of the previous year, by completing the [Service Milestones Form](#).
  12. Maintains the WCEMG Project List in VMS.
  13. Reporting.
    - a. Board Monthly Membership Report which includes monthly VOL Hours Report.

- b. Annual Membership Report for January Board Meeting
- c. Provide Treasurer budget estimates, as requested, to include:
  - 1) Projected Annual TMGA dues
  - 2) Volunteer Recognition awards (Years of Service pins, 100 Hour Pins)
  - 3) Monthly Drawing Gift Cards
  - 4) Membership Meeting Door Prizes
  - 5) Quarterly and/or Annual Awards
- d. Board VMS Project List and statistics for annual VMS Project Review for the November Board Meeting.
- e. Membership Roster for President to forward to TMGA.
- f. Provides reports as requested from the Agent, Board, or Project Coordinators.
- g. Many of these reports can be submitted digitally, and do not necessarily need to be spoken agenda items. This will be determined by the Board.

**C. Audit Committee.**

- 1. The President shall appoint an Audit Committee in November, as per the Bylaws. It shall consist of a chair and two (2) members, none of whom are currently serving on the Board.
- 2. Complete the AgriLife Extension and External Support Groups training modules [Financial Management Best Practices for Volunteers](#).
- 3. The Audit Committee audits the financial records in the presence of the Treasurer and prepares a written report to the Board.
- 4. The outgoing treasurer provides the Audit Committee chair the following, but not limited to, to conduct the audit:
  - a. Copy of previous year's annual audit report
  - b. Copy of previous year's budget
  - c. Treasurer's monthly report for the end of the previous year and for each month of the audit year
  - d. Check register for the year being audited
  - e. Monthly bank statements
  - f. Itemized explanation for each deposit
  - g. Reimbursement request forms with receipt attached and project identified

5. The Audit Committee:
  - a. Verifies all deposits by checking deposit slips with supporting documentation.
  - b. Checks payment request forms for accuracy with supporting receipts.
  - c. Compares bank statements to check register for accuracy.
  - d. Check Budget to Actual year-end report for accuracy.
6. The Audit Committee Chair submits the audit report to the Board at the January Board Meeting.
7. The Board files the Audit Report with the official records of the Corporation by January 15 of each year.

**D. Nominating Committee**

1. The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee, as per the Bylaws. The Committee shall consist of a chair and two (2) members, none of whom are currently serving on the Board.
2. The Committee should be formed by the end of March in order to present a slate of candidates at the October membership meeting. The President and President-Elect shall not serve as a member. No individual shall serve as a member of the Committee for more than two (2) consecutive years.
3. Duties of the Nominating Committee:
  - a. Consider all candidates who meet the requirements set forth in the Bylaws, active member in good standing and who have consented in writing which can be via email to serve, if elected.
  - b. If no candidate is found for an elected office, the Committee can tell the membership that they do not have a nominee and encourage members to volunteer. No one should be nominated without consent.
  - c. The committee will gain approval for any person put forth as an officer from the Extension Agent
  - d. A quorum shall consist of 25 percent of the active members
  - c. The Secretary shall record the results of the election in the meeting minutes.
4. The new officers will begin their terms on January 1 as stated in the Bylaws and be provided training as outlined in Chapter 12. Board of Directors.

## CHAPTER 17. SPECIAL POSITIONS/COORDINATORS

### A. Grow Team Coordinator(s)

1. The Vice President shall appoint the Grow Team Coordinator(s)
2. Requirements: Basic knowledge of how to start plants from seed and how to address problems along the way. Recruit and train a team of growers from the trainees, interns, and membership.
3. Duties:
  - a. Work with the Class Coordinators to offer extra beginner's training for trainees and interns interested in growing plants.
  - b. Organize volunteers for transportation of plants to and from locations and help arrange plant sitters for the time between plant sales, as needed.
4. Supplies and Equipment
  - a. Have a system for checking in and out of supplies and equipment.
  - b. Evaluate with Committee if growing plants for sales and gardens is cost effective for that year. If not, keep the program scaled down for educational purposes only.
  - c. Check the working status of supplies and equipment used for the Grow Team. If more supplies are needed, try to find donations and stay within the allotted budget. If more is needed, meet with Board for permission.
5. Record Keeping: Maintain records of supplies, types and number of plants successfully grown, number of interns taught, and number of total participants.
6. Reporting: Provide WCEMG Treasurer budget estimate for Grow Team for the following year, as requested.

## CHAPTER 18. SPECIAL REPORTS

### A. Chartering County Extension Master Gardener Associations

1. The TMGA and the Extension requires an annual Charter Agreement Form.
2. Chartering is done on an annual calendar year basis, running from January 1 to December 31 of the year, which precedes the date of the submitted report.
3. The President:
  - a. Completes the [Chartering Agreement Form](#) and obtains required documents from the various Committee Members.
  - b. Provides the completed form to the County Extension Agent no later than January 31. Every effort should be made to submit the form prior to that date.
  - c. Maintains proof, either electronically or paper, that documentation was submitted appropriately and on time.
  - d. Provides copy of completed and approved Charter Agreement form to State Master Gardener Coordinator, Jayla Fry.
4. The Agent receives the form and attachments provided by the President.
5. The Membership Chair provides a VMS WCEMG Member Roster based on all members who have recertified for the upcoming year, not the Member Roster as of December 31.

For example, any member listed on the 2022 roster as certified for 2022 that has not met the requirements for recertification in 2023 will be placed in an Inactive Status in VMS as of January.1 The Treasurer also provides the same count to TMGA when paying dues for the upcoming year.

6. The outgoing Treasurer provides the current financial statement based on the financial activities from the previous calendar year.
  - a. The current financial statement based on the financial activities from the previous calendar year.
  - b. The Board approved budget for the upcoming year.
  - c. A copy of the IRS Form 990 or 990-N, or evidence of filing of the form for the chartering year.
  - d. The Audit Report.

**B. Texas Master Gardener Association Annual Dues Invoice**

1. Treasurer pays TMGA dues for the current year beginning in January, but not later than March 1 using [TMGA Annual Form](#) under Dues. A delinquency eliminates WCEMG's ability to submit award applications for activities.
2. As of 2024, dues are \$5.00 per member.
3. Dues will be paid for Certified EMG.

**C. Texas Master Gardener Association Information**

TMGA Director submits a roster of WCEMG Officers and TMGA Directors and Alternates to TMGA Secretary via email by January 31. Roster includes name and email addresses.

**D. Service Milestones**

TMGA recognizes Service Milestones during the annual conference. Membership Chair provides volunteer service years in five (5) year increments, those being 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years as of December 31 of the previous year, by completing the [Service Milestones Form](#).

## CHAPTER 19. ANNUAL BOARD CALENDAR

### JANUARY

#### A. Treasurer.

1. Prior to January Board Meeting: Treasurer meets with bank representative and establishes new signature cards for check writing authorization for incoming President and Treasurer. Establish authorization and passwords for on-line banking and to receive monthly bank statements.
2. Sales tax report, presently set up on an annual basis due around January 20.
3. Files IRS Form 990 or 990-N (e-postcard) for the Corporation's non-profit status beginning in January but not later than May 15.
4. Letters to donors of \$250 or more in the prior year due by January 31 of the subsequent year.

#### B. Membership Cards.

1. Membership Chair provides Membership Cards for recertified members at Membership Meeting.
2. If members are not present at January meeting, Membership Chair will make arrangements to provide Membership Card to member.

#### C. Audit Committee submits final report to the Board at the Board meeting.

#### D. Chartering Documents

##### 1. Treasurer

- a) Submit Annual Approved Budget
- b) Profit and loss statement for the calendar year. Reconcile the December bank statement prior to providing the profit and loss statement.
- c) Submit audit or financial review report

##### 2. President

- a) Submits chartering documentation to the Agent for receipt and the Chartering Form to the State Master Gardener Coordinator, Jayla Fry.

#### E. TMGA Director submits roster of WCEMG Officers and TMGA Directors to TMGA Secretary via email by January 31. Roster includes name and email addresses.

### MARCH

The President appoints the Nominating Committee.

### MAY

Treasurer Files IRS Form 990 or 990-N (e-postcard) for the Corporation's non-profit status beginning in January but not later than May 15.

### AUGUST

A. Membership Chair assesses hours reported for the current year. Contacts individuals who have not met certification requirements and reminds them of upcoming opportunities.

- B. Treasurer solicits budget input far enough in advance, but not later than August 1, to allow the various Coordinators and Points of Contact to provide input for the next calendar year's proposed budget.

## **SEPTEMBER**

- A. President activates the Nominating Committee far enough in advance to allow candidates to be announced at the October membership meeting.
- B. Project Application Request forms are due September 15 to Treasurer.

## **OCTOBER**

- A. October Board Meeting: Annual review of WCEMG approved projects
- B. October Membership Meeting
  - 1. The Nominating Committee presents a slate for each Office and TMGA Directors to be filled and elected at the November annual corporation meeting.
  - 2. Membership Chair begins collecting dues for the following year from members meeting recertification requirements.

## **NOVEMBER**

- A. November Board Meeting: Board approves next fiscal year budget.
- B. Annual Corporation Meeting
  - 1. Election of Officers and TMGA Directors. Twenty five percent (25%) of the certified membership constitutes a quorum<sup>7</sup>.
  - 2. Officer and committee reports.
  - 3. Provide approved budget for review by the general membership.
- C. The President appoints an Audit Committee, which shall consist of a chair and two (2) members, none of whom are currently serving on the Board.
- D. Teams with equipment will provide an annual equipment inventory to the Treasurer no later than December 1.

## **DECEMBER**

- A. Board of Directors Meeting
  - 1. President invites the incoming Board to attend meeting.
- B. Membership Chair informs eligible members who have not reported hours and/or paid dues via the VMS that they will be dropped from membership roster if hours are not reported and dues are not paid by December 31.